IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA NORTHERN DIVISION

RICHARD FIELDS,

Plaintiff,

Plaintiff,

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NOTICE OF REMOVAL

COMES NOW Defendant The Automobile Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut (hereinafter "AICH"), improperly referenced in Plaintiff's Complaint as "Travelers Indemnity Company," and files this Notice of Removal of this action from the Circuit Court of Montgomery County, Alabama (CV-08-206) to the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Northern Division, and shows unto the Court the following:

I.

The above-entitled action was commenced in the Circuit Court of Montgomery County, State of Alabama, on February 6, 2008, and is now pending therein. A copy of Plaintiff's Complaint is attached as part of Exhibit "A." Defendant AICH was served with the Complaint on February 12, 2008. The removal of this case to this Court is timely pursuant to 28 U.S.C. Section 1446(a).

II.

Copies of all process, pleadings, and orders served on or by Defendant AICH in said action are attached as Exhibit "A."

This action is one of a civil nature over which the District Court of the United States has original jurisdiction because of diversity of citizenship, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. Section 1332.

IV.

Plaintiff Richard Fields was at the time of the commencement of this action and is now citizen and resident of the State of California. [Exhibit A, Plaintiff's Complaint at ¶ 1].

V.

Defendant AICH was at the time of the commencement of this action is now a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Connecticut with its principal place of business in Hartford, Connecticut, and was not at the time of the commencement of this action, nor at any time, a citizen or resident of the State of Alabama.

VI.

Defendant AICH and Plaintiff are citizens and residents of different states. Accordingly, complete diversity exists pursuant to 28 U.S.C. Section 1332(a).

VII.

The matter in dispute in Plaintiff's Complaint exceeds the sum of Seventy-five Thousand and no/100 Dollars (\$75,000.00), exclusive of interests and costs. The insurance policy made the basis of the Plaintiff's breach-of-contract claim has a policy limit of \$111,500 for the dwelling and \$11,150 for loss of use. [Exhibit B, Homesaver policy declarations]. Although Plaintiff's Complaint specifies some of the damages that he alleges to have suffered as a result of the alleged breach-of-contract, Plaintiff also seeks an undisclosed amount of damages for "lost rental income and other expenses."

Moreover, Plaintiff asserts separate claims against AICH for bad-faith failure to pay and bad-faith failure to investigate. With respect to each of his bad-faith claims, Plaintiff asserts a claim for "damages in an amount to be determined by this court, plus interest, and costs" as a result of the alleged conduct. Additionally, Plaintiff makes specific demand for an award of punitive damages with respect to each of his bad-faith claims. While Plaintiff does not specifically allege the amount of damages he is seeking in his bad-faith claims, he also does not limit his demand for recovery. Further, the Alabama appellate courts have upheld awards in excess of \$75,000 in bad-faith actions. See, e.g. Acceptance Ins. Co. v. Brown, 832 So. 2d 1 (Ala. 2001) (the plaintiff alleged breach-of-contract and bad-faith claims against insurer, and Alabama Supreme Court affirmed compensatory damage award of \$270,000); United Services Auto. Assn. v. Hobbs, 858 So. 2d 966 (Ala. Civ. Appeal 2003) (the plaintiff alleged breach-of-contract and bad-faith claims against insurer, and Alabama Court of Civil Appeals affirmed jury award of \$80,000).

Therefore, based on the allegations in Plaintiff's Complaint, the amount of policy limits at issue, and Plaintiff's unspecified claim for compensatory and punitive damages, Plaintiff is seeking damages in excess of the jurisdictional limit of this Court.¹

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Defendant The Automobile Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut prays that this Honorable Court will take jurisdiction over this

¹If AICH has misinterpreted Plaintiff's Complaint, and Plaintiff never intends to seek more than \$74,999 in damages in this action, removal would not be appropriate. Accordingly, as set forth in *Brooks v. Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc.*, 153 F. Supp. 2d 1299 (M.D. Ala. 2001), if Plaintiff will file a pleading with this Court and execute an affidavit that he is not seeking, nor will he ever accept, a total damage award for all of his claims against AICH in excess of \$74,999, this case will be subject to remand to State Court. In the event that Plaintiff makes such a stipulation by pleading and affidavit, AICH will accept this statement and will concede that the case is not properly removable and is due to be remanded to the Montgomery Circuit Court.

matter and issue all necessary orders and process in order to remove the above-referenced action from the Circuit Court of Montgomery County, Alabama.

Respectfully submitted,

Candan Sudson

Brenen G. Ely (asb-0366-e54b)

Joel S. Isenberg (asb-8855-n76j)

Candace L. Hudson (asb-8314-n66h)

Attorneys for Defendant The Automobile Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut, improperly identified in Plaintiff's Complaint as "Travelers Indemnity Company"

OF COUNSEL:

ELY & ISENBERG, LLC 600 Beacon Parkway West, Suite 104 Birmingham, AL 35209

Telephone:

(205) 313-1200

Facsimile:

(205) 313-1201

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I do hereby certify that a true and accurate copy of the foregoing has been served on all parties of record via the federal court efile system or U.S. Mail on this the 5th day of March, 2008.

James M. Smith, Attorney at Law, P.C. 10A Commerce Row 529 South Perry Street Montgomery, Alabama 36104

OF COLINSEL

مورد ده اد

IN THE CL MONTGOMER	RCUIT COU Y COUNTY,		2000 (
RICHARD FIELDS)		8	
Plaintiff,)		6 PM	7211 G
v.) (CIVIL ACTION NO: CV-20	008 250	200
TRAVELERS INDEMNITY COMPANY,)		ഗ	~
a Connecticut Corporation))			
Defendant)			

COMPLAINT

- 1. Plaintiff, Richard Fields, is a resident of the state of California and is over nineteen (19) years of age, but owns real property in Montgomery County, Alabama.
- 2. Defendant, Travelers Indemnity Company, is a Connecticut corporation, licensed to do business in the state of Alabama. Its registered agent for service is Gregory Miller, 3000 Riverchase Galleria, Birmingham, Alabama 35244.
- 3. The acts complained of occurred and relate to the real property located in Montgomery County, Alabama. Thus, this Court has jurisdiction over the matter and venue is proper.
- 4. Plaintiff is the owner of an apartment building located at 945-961 East Edgemont Drive, Montgomery, Alabama (the building). The building was insured by the Defendant.
- 5. On September 16, 2004, and March 27, 2005, Plaintiff suffered storm-related losses to the building.
- 6. As a result of these occurrences, Plaintiff was caused to incur approximately \$18,000.00 in repair costs for the building's roof and interior. Plaintiff also suffered lost rental income and other expenses.
- 7. In accordance with the terms of his policy and contract of insurance, Plaintiff gave prompt notice of his losses to Defendant.

- On January 16, 2005, Defendant issued partial payment for certain roof 8. repairs and clean-up expenses resulting from the September 16, 2005 loss.
- On April 15, 2005, Defendant issued a check in the amount of \$228.37 to 9. Plaintiff. This check purportedly represented payment for the March 27, 2005 loss.
- On May 2, 2005, Plaintiff contacted Defendant by letter demanding coverage 10. for additional repair expenses that Plaintiff had incurred for damage not Plaintiff considered or investigated by Defendant's adjuster. contemporaneously provided Defendant with documentation of these expenses.
- On May 18, 2005, despite having received the additional claim documentation 11. and the claim for lost rental income, Defendant refused to investigate the claim further or make any further payment.
- Subsequent to Defendant's failure and refusal to pay for Plaintiff's covered 12. losses and lost rental income, Plaintiff referred this matter to his attorney.
- On September 29, 2006, Plaintiff's counsel notified Defendant, by letter, of 13. the deficiencies in its payment for Plaintiff's covered losses and demanded payment for same.
- After delay of several months, Defendant requested additional documentation 14. of Plaintiff's actual losses. Said documentation was provided on March 2, 2006. Defendant again failed and refused to issue payment for the covered losses and has continued to do so despite numerous efforts to resolve the matter.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant for damages in an amount to be determined by this Court, plus interest, and costs.

Count II **Bad Faith**

- 15. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates paragraphs 1-15.
- Under the terms of its policy and contract of insurance with Defendant, 16. Defendant was obligated to reimburse Plaintiff for the building's "fair rental value" for any period of time for which it was rendered unfit to live in by a loss.
- After suffering lost rents amounting to approximately \$4,360.00 as a result of 17. the covered losses, Plaintiff demanded coverage for same from Defendant.

- 18. Defendant failed to conduct any investigation of Plaintiff's loss.
- 19. Defendant has knowledge that it neither has nor has put forward any legitimate reason for its failure to extend coverage for Plaintiff's lost rental income.
- 20. Despite its duty to cover lost rental income, and its knowledge of Plaintiff's loss, Defendant has failed or refused to pay for the same or to pay the reasonable value of the same.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant for damages in an amount to be determined by this Court, plus interest, and costs.

Count III Bad Faith

- 21. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates paragraphs 1-21.
- 22. As a result of losses covered under the terms of Plaintiff's policy and contract of insurance with Defendant, Plaintiff suffered losses for physical damage to his building in excess of \$18,000.00.
- Defendant has failed to cover certain portions of Plaintiff's loss, including, but not limited to, covered losses for repairs to interior portions of the building.
- 24. Defendant has knowledge that it neither has nor has put forward any legitimate reason for its failure to extend coverage for Plaintiff's aforesaid losses.
- 25. Defendant has intentionally failed and refused to cover Plaintiff's losses.
- As a result of Defendant's bad faith failure to pay for losses, Plaintiff has suffered approximately \$7,500.00 in unpaid repair costs for covered losses.
- 27. Plaintiff claims punitive damages of Defendant because of Defendant's willful and oppressive conduct.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant for damages in an amount to be determined by this Court, plus interest, and costs.

Count III Bad Faith Failure to Investigate

28. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates paragraphs 1-27 above and adopts same herein by reference.

Page 4 of 4

- Defendant intentionally failed and refused to properly investigate Plaintiff's 29. losses.
- Defendant intentionally failed to determine whether any lawful or arguable 30. reason existed for its refusal to pay Plaintiff's full repair costs and lost rental income.
- Plaintiff claims punitive damages of Defendant because of Defendant's willful 31. and oppressive conduct.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant for damages in an amount to be determined by this Court, plus interest, and costs.

Count IV **Breach of Contract**

- 32. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates paragraphs 1-31 above and adopts same herein by reference.
- Plaintiff avers that the Defendant breached the contract between the parties by 33. its failure to fully pay the claims it is obligated to pay and as consequence thereof the Plaintiff has been damaged.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant for damages in an amount to be determined by this Court, plus interest, and costs.

JAMES M. SMITH (SMI173)

Attorney for Richard Fields, Plaintiff

JURY DEMAND

PLAINTIFF HEREBY DEMANDS A TRIAL BY STRUCK JURY ON ALL COUNTS OF THIS CAUSE.

OF COUNSEL:

James M. Smith, Attorney at Law, P.C. 10A Commerce Row 529 South Perry Street

Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Office: (334) 264-5540 Facsimile: (334) 264-5541

E-mail: jim@jimsmith-attorney.com

Exhibit A

MEDIATION REQUESTED: YES NO UNDECIDED

			CV 108	3-20U
State of Alabama Unified Judicial System	COVER S		Case Number	Judge Code:
Form ARCiv-93 Rev.5/99	(Not For Domestic F		Month Day Year	
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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT	OF	MONTGO!		, ALABAMA
ïR	ichard Fields	(Name i v .	of County) Travelers Indemnity Co	mpany
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NATURE OF SUIT: Sele	ct primary cause of action, b	y checking box (check	only one) that best characterizes ye	our action:
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	F ☑ INITIAL FILING	A ☐ APPEAL FRO DISTRICT COU T ☐TRANSFERRE	JRT	
•	- Indiana - Indi	OTHER CIRCUI		
HAS JURY TRIAL BEE	N DEMANDED?		te: Checking "Yes" does not constitute trial. (See Rules 38 and 39, Ala.R.Civ.l	
RELIEF REQUESTED:	MONETARY AWARD	REQUESTED	NO MONETARY AWARD REQUESTE	3
ATTORNEY CODE: S M I I 7 3	February 6, 2	2008	Signature of Attorgey/Party filing this	form

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF
IONTGOMERY COUNTY, ALABAMA

MONIGOME	KI COUP	VII, ALADAMA	2008	
RICHARD FIELDS)		FEB -	
Plaintiff,)		6 PM	-Z1
v.)	CIVIL ACTION NO: CV-2	2008 720) <u>G</u>
TRAVELERS INDEMNITY)		O1	• •
COMPANY,)			
a Connecticut Corporation)			
Defendant.)			

COMPLAINT

- 1. Plaintiff, Richard Fields, is a resident of the state of California and is over nineteen (19) years of age, but owns real property in Montgomery County, Alabama.
- 2. Defendant, Travelers Indemnity Company, is a Connecticut corporation, licensed to do business in the state of Alabama. Its registered agent for service is Gregory Miller, 3000 Riverchase Galleria, Birmingham, Alabama 35244.
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JAMES M. SMITH (SMI173)

Attorney for Richard Fields, Plaintiff

JURY DEMAND

PLAINTIFF HEREBY DEMANDS A TRIAL BY STRUCK JURY ON ALL COUNTS OF THIS CAUSE.

OF COUNSEL:

James M. Smith, Attorney at Law, P.C. 10A Commerce Row 529 South Perry Street Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Office: (334) 264-5540 Facsimile: (334) 264-5541

E-mail: jim@jimsmith-attorney.com

State of Alabama	SU	MMONS		Case Numbe	er
Unified Judicial System		CIVIL-		CV-2008	200
Form C-34 Rev 6/88					
IN THE Circ	uit CO	URT OF	Montgom	eryCOU	NTY
Plaintiff Rich	ard Fields	v. Defenda	nt <u>Traveler</u>	s Indemnity Compar	ny
NOTICE TO Gregory	Miller, as registered a				
THE COMPLAINT WHICH IS ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR YOUR WRITTEN ANSWER, E THE CLERK OF THIS COURT YOUR ATTORNEY TO THE PADDRESS IS	ATTACHED TO THIS SU RIGHTS, YOU OR YO ITHER ADDMITTING O A COPY OF YOUR AN	JMMONS IS IMPO UR ATTORNEY A PR DENYING EAC SWER MUST BE F'S ATTORNEY	ORTANT AND Y ARE REQUIRED CH ALLEGATIO MAILED OR HA Jame	OU MUST TAKE IMM TO FILE THE ORIG N IN THE COMPLAIN AND DELIVERED BY S.M. Smith	INAL OF NT WITH YOU OR WHOSE
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© Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also item 4 if Restricted Delivery is des Print your name and address on to so that we can return the card to Attach this card to the back of the or on the front if space permits. 1. Article Addressed to: Mr. Greg. y Miller Go Traveler: Indemn. 3000 Riverchase Calle. Birmingham, Alaba.	complete sired. he reverse you. e mailpiece,	A. Signature X B. Received by Print D. Is delivery address If YES, enter delive 3. Service Type Continued Mail Insured Mail 4. Restricted Delivery	ed Name) 4 different from its ry address belo Express M. Return Rec C.O.D.	☐ Agent ☐ Addressee C. Date of Delivery Z - / Z m 1? ☐ Yes w: ☐ No SEC ☐ ☐
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AlaFile E-Notice

03-CV-2008-000206.00

Judge: CHARLES PRICE

To: SMITH JAMES MCCAULEY jim@jimsmith-attorney.com

NOTICE OF SERVICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, ALABAMA

RICHARD FIELDS VS. TRAVELERS INDEMNITY COMPANY 03-CV-2008-000206.00

The following matter was served on 2/12/2008

D001 TRAVELERS INDEMNTIY COMPANY CERTIFIED MAIL

SIGNED BY D.L. HUEY

MELISSA RITTENOUR CIRCUIT COURT CLERK MONTGOMERY COUNTY, ALABAMA 251 S. LAWRENCE STREET MONTGOMERY, AL 36102

334-832-4950

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, ALABAMA

RICHARD FIELDS,

Plaintiff,

S
CIVIL ACTION NUMBER:

V.

CV - 08 - 206

TRAVELERS INDEMNITY COMPANY,

Defendant.

NOTICE OF REMOVAL

TO THE PLAINTIFF IN THE ABOVE-STYLED CAUSE AND HIS ATTORNEYS OF RECORD:

Please take notice that on the 5th day of March, 2008, the undersigned, as attorneys for Defendant The Automobile Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut (hereinafter "AICH"), improperly referenced in Plaintiff's Complaint as "Travelers Indemnity Company," filed on its behalf a notice of removal in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Northern Division, to remove the above-entitled cause of action from the Circuit Court of Montgomery County, Alabama (CV-08-0206) to said United States District Court, and also filed a true copy of said Notice of Removal with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Montgomery County, Alabama.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenen G. Ely (ELY004)

Joel S. Isenberg (ISE001)

Candace L. Hudson (HUD026)

Attorneys for Defendant The Automobile Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut, improperly referenced in Plaintiff's Complaint as "Travelers Indemnity Company"

OF COUNSEL:

ELY & ISENBERG, LLC 600 Beacon Parkway West, Suite 104 Birmingham, AL 35209

Telephone:

(205) 313-1200

Facsimile:

(205) 313-1201

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I do hereby certify that a true and accurate copy of the foregoing has been served on all parties of record via the Alacourt efile system or U.S. Mail on this the 5th day of March, 2008.

James M. Smith, Attorney at Law, P.C. 10A Commerce Row 529 South Perry Street Montgomery, Alabama 36104

OF COUNSEL

Exhibit B

Continuation Declarations



HOMESAVER POLICY

Named Insured

Your Agency's Name and Address

RICHARD L FIELDS 3233 GRAND AVE CHINO HILLS CA 90923 GURLEY-COOKE AGENCY INC P O BOX 170099 BIRMINGHAM AL 35217

Your Policy Number: Your Account Number: 931620688 663 1

931620688

For Policy Service Call: (205) 841-4444

For Claim Service Call: 1-800-CLAIM33

Policy Period

FROM: 09-04-04 To: 09-04-05 12:01 A.M. STANDARD TIME AT THE RESIDENCE PREMISES

945-951 EAST EDGEMONT MONTGOMERY, AL 36111

ts of P lity	Premium	
1,500 \$ 1,150 2,000 1,150	456.00 INCI INCI INCI	
0,000 \$	21.00 INCL	
•		

09 99 HS 663 HS 01 01 12 02 Rental Dwelling Form

HS 04 10 09 99 HS 04 16 09 99

Special Provisions - Alabama

Additional Interest

Premises Alarm Or Fire Protection

System

HS 80 93 12 02

Limited Fungi, Other Microbes

or Rot Remediation

Section I Section II Property Coverage Aggregate Sublimit \$10,000 \$50,000

Total Premium

477.00

Your Premium Reflects the Following Credits or State Surcharges

Premises Alarm System-Fire

5.0%

Continued on next page

Insured Copy

Page 1 of 2

PL-8851 1-97 412/0HH223

000080/00014 F3194D80 5647 08/03/04

In case of loss under section I, only that part of the loss over the stated deductible is covered.

First Mortgagee

CAPITAL BANK 4138 CARMICHAEL RD MONTGOMERY, AL 36106

Additional Interest

C K CONSULTANTS 3233 GRAND AVE CHINO HILLS, CA 91709 Interest: MANAGES PROP

Your Insurer: The Automobile Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut

One of The Travelers Property Casualty Companies

One Tower Square, Hartford, CT 06183

For Your Information

Thank you for insuring with Travelers. We appreciate your business. If you have any questions about your insurance, please contact your agent or representative.

These declarations are part of your Homesaver Insurance Policy, Rental Dwelling Form 663. If a change number and effective date appear at the top of this page, these Declarations replace any previous Declarations on that date.

Coverage for your home has been increased by 6.0% to more adequately reflect the cost to rebuild your home. This adjustment was based on information provided by Marshall & Swift/Boeckh, an independent firm specializing in construction and consumer costs. If you need to adjust your limits further, or for any other policy changes, please contact your insurance representative.

DUPLICATE

Court Name: U S DISTRICT COURT - AL/M Division: 2

Receipt Number: 4602004180 Cashier ID: brobinso

Transaction Date: 03/05/2008 Payer Name: ELY AND ISENBERG LLC

CIVIL FILING FEE

For: ELY AND ISENBERG LLC

Case/Party: D-ALM-2-08-CV-000155-001 Amount: \$350.00

CHECK

Check/Money Order Num: 1087 Amt Tendered: \$350.00

Total Due: \$350.00 Total Tendered: \$350.00

Change Amt: \$0.00

FIELDS V. TRAVELERS INS ETC